

Brethren Evangelist

"I Am the Way, the Truth and the Life."—Jesus

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The Martyrdom Test

Events in China are just now furnishing the critics and the enemies of Christianity an opportunity to do an unusual amount of blatherskiting, in their favorite effort to cast opprobrium upon the church and the religion of the cross. They point with scorn to the spectacle of missionaries fleeing for their lives, instead of enduring the ordeal of torture and martyrdom at their posts of duty. The native Christians, they point out, are thus abandoned to their fate and suffer all the rage of the fanatical Boxers, themselves and families murdered with every circumstance of cruelty and horror, while the shepherds of these poor sheep flee like the hireling when the wolf cometh. Comparisons are drawn between these modern evangelists and the martyrs of the historic persecutions, who were not zealous to escape the rage of implacable enemies, but endured to the death, and thus lent the great Cause all the tremendous moral effect of the most extreme personal sacrifice in its behalf. There are those who add to this indictment the charge that the missionaries are directly responsible for the Boxer insurrection, with all its accompaniments of blood and rapine. All this kind of talk may be dismissed by the consideration that these enemies of the cross are prejudiced judges, that deep seated enmity toward God is the major premise of all their logic, that they willingly antagonize and slander the only civilizing force in the world, and that they were never known to furnish martyrs to any cause. A very little examination of their statements shows that they are not true. Some missionaries are escaping to the coast, but hundreds remain at their posts. The members of the China Inland Mission, the great work inaugurated and managed by J. Hudson Taylor, are entirely cut off from escape, and doubtless many of them will suffer martyrdom. Hundreds and perhaps thousands of native converts will die rather than renounce Christ. As to the responsibility of the missionaries for the Boxer riots, there is no evidence tending to prove the charge, excepting upon the philosophical and historical grounds that a great and thorough work of righteousness in the midst of a depraved society

never fails to arouse the fiercest passions of hatred and enmity, resulting in violence where the arm of the law is not strong enough to afford protection.

A glance at the work carried on by the missionaries in China is interesting and instructive. There are 12 universities and colleges, having 1,814 students; 66 theological and training schools, with 1,315 students; high schools and seminaries number 166, with 6,393 pupils. Industrial training institutions are 7, with 191 pupils. There are 30 medical and nurses' schools, with 231 pupils, and 6 kindergarten schools, having 194 scholars. Dr. Dennis reports 23 mission publishing houses, with annual issues of 2,640,335. Thirty-two magazines and papers are published in Chinese dialects. There are 124 mission hospitals and 240 dispensaries. Nine orphanages have been established, and eleven homes for lepers and the children of lepers.

Of course our supercilious critics never stop to learn facts of this kind, and affect to disbelieve them when forced to their attention. Argument with cads of that sort is worse than useless. They state the case as they wish to have it, and when driven from the ground of fact and reason, will entrench themselves more firmly than ever behind an inveterate hatred of light and righteousness, from which nothing can dislodge them.

Really we have little to do with these nocturnal insects. Their denial of the light will not prevent the rising of the sun, neither will their frantic vociferation impede the progress of God's chariots. The cause of righteousness and religion has swept on for thousands of years with increasing momentum, it has never yielded to opposition, it has never been permanently defeated in any age or in any quarter, it has withstood the rage of devils and devilish men, and there is no evidence whatever in the tremendous events of our times, whether in China or elsewhere, that the progress of the religion of the cross will be any less triumphant in the future than it has been in the past. God is not going to forsake his world until it has been redeemed, and it is the highest wisdom for all men to fall in line with his divine and glorious purposes.